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ABSTRACT

Paid educational leave should become a regular feature of work life in Canada, according to the National Advisory Panel on Skill Development Leave. Following an eight-month study of the background and reasons for educational leave, the panel recommended that educational leave be established for the following reasons: (1) equity in allowing persons who initially reject further training to acquire it later in life; (2) the need to update skills in workers whose skills are becoming obsolete; (3) a reduction in unemployment by removing some persons from the work force; (4) granting individuals a time for growth that may result in economic development and innovation for the country; (5) the need to develop basic skills in some persons; and (6) planning for work force restructuring as a result of technological advancement. However, the panel recognized that barriers to the leave concept exist, such as cost, lack of child care, attitudes, schedules and policies of educational institutions, lack of information about adult education, and overly centralized control of Canadian employment centers. The advisory panel set priority participants for the program, i.e., women, native people, unemployed youth, disabled adults, immigrants, minority groups, and older adults, with special attention to educationally disadvantaged adults and those threatened with job loss and skill obsolescence. Finally, the panel made recommendations to be undertaken immediately and within two years to institute an educational leave policy in Canada. (KC)

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# LEARNING FOR LIFE

## OVERCOMING THE SEPARATION OF WORK AND LEARNING

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**THE REPORT OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE TO THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION**

**March 5, 1984**

# "LEARNING FOR LIFE"

## OVERCOMING THE SEPARATION OF WORK AND LEARNING

## A REPORT OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE TO THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION


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5 March, 1984

The Honourable John Roberts, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment and Immigration
House of Commons
Ottawa K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Roberts:

We have the honour to submit for your sympathetic consideration LEARNING FOR LIFE, the report of the National Advisory Panel on Skill Development Leave, appointed on July 20, 1983.

This report deals with the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and therefore wealth, in Canada. Our recommendations are based upon an examination of the two volume report: LEARNING A LIVING IN CANADA by the Skill Development Leave Task Force which was appointed by your predecessor, and also upon the advice we obtained from a Consultation organized by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, October 25-27, 1983.

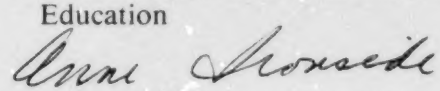
Because of acceleration in the pace of skill depreciation and the threat to our country posed by continuing high unemployment, and also because of the federal government's obligation to distribute opportunities equitably among Canadians, we urge you and your Colleagues to move rapidly to implement our recommendations.

The strongest thread which runs through our report as well as the Task Force report, and the Consultation, is that there is an urgent need for action.

You will note that we urge you to act immediately in some areas, and within two years in others. We have also called upon you to exercise leadership in promoting a Canada-wide debate on the issue of educational leave. The alternative to action will, in our view, be too costly for the community, the economy, and our capacity to control our own future.

Respectfully submitted by:

Anne Ironside, Chair: President, Canadian Association for Adult Education



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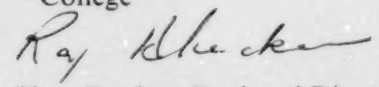
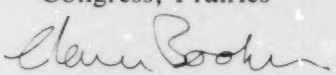


Clare Booker, Regional Director of Education, Canadian Labour Congress, Prairies



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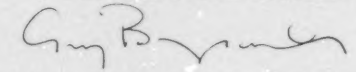
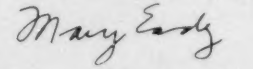
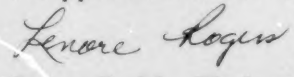


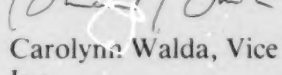
Mary Eady, Deputy Minister of Labour, Manitoba



Lenore Rogers, Past President, Canadian Congress on Learning Opportunities for Women



Stuart Smith, Chairman, Science Council of Canada



Carolyne Walda, Vice President Human Resources, General Foods Inc.

# BACKGROUND

This report represents a step in a continuing journey. The concept of paid educational leave first received international prominence ten years ago as a result of adoption of Convention 140 by the International Labour Organization. Within Canada, paid educational leave has been the subject of some scrutiny and debate in the ensuing decade on the part of both the federal and provincial governments, in university, business and labour circles and in the media.

Educational leave with income support in Canada is not just a matter of discussion and debate. It has also been implemented in a variety of workplace environments including:

* hundreds of collective agreements
* management training in both the private and public sectors
* academic circles

In 1979 Labour Canada's *Commission of Inquiry on Educational Leave and Productivity* recommended a national policy. Since then, several major reports have recommended variations on this Commission's findings including:

* a Task Force on Microelectronics (*In the Chips: Opportunities, People, Partnerships,* Labour Canada, Ottawa, 1982)
* a Federal Parliamentary Task Force (*Work for Tomorrow: Employment Opportunities for the 80's,* Ottawa, House of Commons, 1981)
* the Economic Council of Canada (*In Short Supply: Jobs and Skills in the 80's,* Ottawa, 1982)
* Québec Commission d'étude sur la formation professionnelle et socio-culturelle des adultes. (*Learning: a Voluntary and Responsible Action.* Final report-in French; abridged version of final report-English. Québec, 1982)
* an Employment and Immigration Canada Task Force (*Labour Market Development in the 1980's,* Ottawa, 1981)
* Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council (*Employment Impacts of New Technologies,* Ottawa, December 1982)
* the Canadian Association for Adult Education and l'Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (*From the Adult's Point of View,* Montreal/Toronto, October, 1982)

From these reports, there is discerned a clear need for immediate action. There are also issues which still require more extensive debate among the members of the public, between provincial and federal governments and between business and labour representatives.

For several decades the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and its predecessor agencies have invested many billions of dollars in the skills and capacities of both employed and unemployed members of Canada's labour force. Since 1967, when Parliament passed the Adult Occupational Training Act, the emphasis in federal spending initiatives has gone towards investments in skill development within recognized educational institutions. Decisions regarding the choices of programs and allocation of training places have generally been made by bodies with no members representing the learning population, with effective control resting with the Commission and, to a lesser extent, the provinces through the National Training Agreements.

**"I can think of no social program which holds greater promise than this one for the benefit of individual workers, for employers, and for the country at large.**

**Paid educational leave could be a valuable instrument for giving workers a second chance. It is aimed at not only enabling the individual worker to find his or her place in occupational life, but also to develop his or her potential as a citizen in the social and political life of the country".**

John Munro
Minister of Labour for Canada June 13, 1977
International Labour Conference in Geneva.

This report utilizes boxes containing:

- **dissenting views or clarification from individual Panel members**

- **quotes from other sources which the Panel found relevant**

Following passage of the National Training Act, Cabinet requested the Minister of Employment and Immigration, in consultation with the Minister of Labour, to examine leave for education and training as a tool by which working Canadians could ensure their continued employability in the face of technological change. Consequently, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, then Minister of Employment and Immigration, initiated a three stage process, of which this report is the culmination.

In December 1982 he announced the appointment of a Task Force to consider "skill development leave" as a "mechanism for retraining, upgrading and updating workers in a dynamic Canadian society".

Drawing upon leadership from the business, labour, government and education sectors, this Task Force consulted widely in the community before publishing *Learning a Living in Canada,* a two volume study which concluded with "options and mechanisms in support of a national direction for Skill Development Leave" on September 22, 1983. The Task Force commissioned thirty-two studies which have enriched substantially the information background regarding the concept and application of educational leave.* *Learning a Living in Canada* was distributed widely throughout the Canadian community as a contribution to the government's commitment to "consultation on human resource development".

* See Bibliography



Following the publication of *Learning a Living in Canada*, the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council sponsored the second stage of the process, a National Consultation on Skill Development Leave on 25-27 October, 1983, which assembled 250 leaders from the fields of business, labour, government, education and the voluntary sector to review and assess the "options and mechanisms" of the report.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration appointed the members of the National Advisory Panel on Skill Development Leave on July 20, 1983 with a mandate:

1. To review and assess the options in respect to skill development leave presented in the report of the Task Force on Skill Development Leave.
2. To hear and assess the views of business, education labour and provincial government committees as presented in a colloquium to be organized by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council.
3. To prepare a report to the Minister of Employment and Immigration setting out recommendations for possible courses of action that the federal government should follow in respect to the implementation of a policy on skill development leave.

**"The old cycle of schooling, training and work is likely to be replaced by a sequence of retraining and re-education. In recognition of this, arrangements for lifelong skill development must be investigated carefully."**

– "In Short Supply", Report of the Economic Council, 1982, p. 95.

This Panel participated in the National Consultation and learned the views of the various sectors. In the ensuing three month period, the National Advisory Panel has considered all of the advice and has sought common ground towards the present report and recommendations.

Readers who wish additional background are referred to the accompanying bibliography as well as to *Learning a Living in Canada* and the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council's report of the National Consultation.*

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# THE CASE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

Business, labour and other sectors increasingly recognize the need to enhance the involvement, participation, commitment and sense of belonging that Canadian adults develop towards their working environments. Trends in industrial restructuring reinforce this need. Our principal international economic competitors already recognize that the skills and capacities of the working population represent the largest contribution to a country's productivity.

## 1. Efficiency and Equity

The position in favour of an earned right to educational leave was stated by the OECD in 1975:*

> **"Failure to acquire or exercise at the earliest moment the right to more education generally disenfranchises the individual for good. The underlying principle of recurrent education is that the right to education should not be determined in this manner, but that individuals should be able to defer it to a more appropriate stage of their life."**

The OECD's statement has been echoed in numerous reports and recommendations within Canada and throughout the industrialized world in recent years. It is a natural extension into the post-industrial age of the basic right to education, guaranteed by the Universal Charter of Human Rights.

The Panel believes that this right enjoys substantial support in public opinion and, further, that this support will grow with increased recognition of the stake all Canadians have in upgrading the skills and capacities of the adult population. The earned right to leave for educational purposes is an idea whose time has come, but it is currently not available to most working Canadians. Among the barriers working people face are a lack of funds, time and accessible opportunities. The Panel seeks equity in extending to all the earned right and access to skill development which is now available only to privileged groups.

The Panel detects in policy discussions and documents a tendency to contrast efficiency and equity motives for policy initiatives. This has been, in the Panel's view, mis-used to label concern for addressing special groups' interests as an equity, or redistribution question. We reject this simplistic approach. Equity and efficiency can be enhanced together by good public policy. The long-term social and economic cost of neglecting those in need may be enormous.

Education is principal among developmental functions in society. Therefore it makes sense for income support to be used in part for an educational function and not solely for maintenance purposes. Just as learning leads to independence and self-reliance for the individual, a learning society will lead to self-reliance and independence for Canada.

* OECD, Center for Educational Research and Innovation, *Recurrent Education Trends and Issues*, Paris, 1975.

**"Fully 87 per cent of the 2,000-person random sample survey implemented by Gallup for CAAE/ICEA responded favourably to the following statement and question:**

*Some people in Canada think programs should be available to enable working people to take time off, on a short-term or part-time basis, to improve skills or adapt themselves to the changing workplace. They would continue to earn income during courses and they would return to their job upon completion. If this practice were established in Canada, would you tend to be in favour of it or not?*

Task Force on Skill Development Leave
Learning a Living in Canada, Vol. II. p. 6
Employment and Immigration Canada,
Ottawa, 1983

**"A Learning Society is one that places a high value upon human development. Its emphasis is on people as a key resource and it attaches top priority to investing in their continuing growth and capacity to contribute to the community in both the economic and social spheres."**

- Walter Pitman, Canadian Association for Adult Education

## 2. Skill Obsolescence

Acceleration in the pace of change brought on by the twin forces of technological change and international competition is affecting working Canadians by reducing the useful duration of employment skills. Informed observers have suggested that Canada may be falling behind in the international race to adopt new technologies. Others see the same threat in our relative neglect of the skill needs of our adult population. As the rate of skill depreciation increases, skill obsolescence will become a critical factor in employment and competition with other countries for markets, and hence employment opportunities.

Failure to compete leads to an export of jobs. We need to be flexible in the face of a rapidly changing international situation including factors such as:

- volatile commodity prices
- disparities in comparative wage rates
- new technologies/obsolete plants and equipment
- the rise of knowledge-based businesses
- industrial restructuring

all of which influence the rise and fall of whole industries in Canada and place new pressures on affected workers and businesses to adapt or suffer the consequences.

The pace of change is therefore increasing the value of *flexibility* and *adaptability* on the part of working Canadians. The existing pattern of learning, earning and retirement must give way to a pattern of inter-weaving of working and learning spread over a lifetime.

**"...Depending on its diffusion rate and its productivity effect, the chip could result in an unemployment rate of up to 35 percent for female clerical workers by 1990. Much of this job loss could well be affected by the increased demand for technical and professional workers; however, according to the study, few of the displaced workers have access to the training opportunities required to fill the new positions. The sober conclusion of the study is that unless women move away from traditional jobs into demand-oriented occupations, they will likely face severe structural unemployment in the 1990's."**

– "In Short Supply", Report of the Economic Council, 1982. p. 88.

## 3. Reducing Unemployment

Unemployment represents forced withdrawal from income-earning work. If, instead, it were possible to encourage working people to voluntarily participate in skill development programs, thereby leaving the workplace temporarily, with adequate income support during their absence, the imbalance between supply and demand that constitutes aggregate unemployment would decline. In fact, it is a type of shortened work year but with a training component. This is one attractive attribute of an educational leave policy; it represents a means to reduce unemployment while investing in the skills of the labour force. Among the potential beneficiaries of the demand for replacement labour are both the young and the long-term unemployed. An increase in teaching employment might also be expected to result.

## 4. Development and Innovation

In the economic future facing Canada, there will be considerable requirement for a population skilled and experienced in innovation. Working Canadians will be faced with constant change—in their workplace, in their careers, in the nature of work itself. Personal fulfillment and the health of our national economy will depend on the ability of Canadians not only to meet this challenge, but to grow and benefit from it.

A succession of careers, interspersed with periods of intensive skill training, will enable workers to bring varied experiences to new situations; they can contribute new approaches and new ideas in each new career. The cumulative effect of this continued change, properly nourished and enhanced by periodic educational leave, is that more and more working Canadians will be able to contribute to economic innovation and development.

## 5. The Need for Basic and Generic Skills

Despite the best efforts of governments, employers and unions to project occupational demands, these projections are uncertain because of the rapidity of economic, technological and social change. Because of this factor of unpredictability, basic and generic skills are increasingly important to the future Canadian labour force.

This is especially important in view of current training priorities and practice. Only through a new emphasis upon basic and generic skills can Canadians achieve the adaptability to acquire job-specific skills at intervals throughout their working lives.

As our economy adjusts to technological change and industrial restructuring, Canadians are going to need entrepreneurial skills. Many are attempting to start their own businesses; others, faced with closures, are trying to run companies with their fellow workers and managers.

Communities are examining ways of providing services and manufacturing products through cooperatives and non-profit organizations, thereby providing employment. Community development skills will be needed to enable these new styles of enterprise to succeed.

Basic and generic skills are seen as the means of economic survival in the future, balancing, in importance, job-specific occupational and so-called "critical" skills. This increased emphasis on basic and generic skills is especially important since the National Training Act has caused too great a focus on the job-specific skills, preventing many Canadians from obtaining vitally needed general upgrading.

Basic and generic skills include:

* written communication
* logic and analysis
* basic science
* mathematics
* understanding of the economic and cultural environment
* problem solving
* entrepreneurial skills.

**"In our economic situation, the forecasting, planning and control of labour "demand" and consequently of training, are practically impossible. Within such a structure, trying to adapt training to narrowly defined jobs would result in investments in education being more uncertain and less effective."**

– Paul Bélanger, Directeur général,
Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes

## 6. Planning for Re-Structuring

The Canadian community must plan for industrial restructuring. Programs have been developed by the Employment and Immigration Commission in the area of work-sharing in threatened industries. Similar efforts are needed to provide for skill development of affected workers *in advance* of the closing of enterprises. Employers need encouragement to share with their employees information on projected layoffs sufficiently in advance to enable cooperative ventures in re-skilling.

# BARRIERS

A number of significant barriers face adults who seek to upgrade their skills and capacities.

## 1. Situational Barriers

Chief among these are cost and lack of time, transportation difficulties and lack of child care.

## 2. Attitudes and Dispositional Barriers

Many adults, particularly those in lower socio-economic groups, have a low motivation for participation in formal learning situations, or have other negative attitudes towards adult education. Many fear to participate because of previous bad experiences with learning 'opportunities' which did not suit their personal circumstances. Many others hesitate to ask for learning opportunities because they might fear for their job security. This would change if educational leave were seen as a right and not just a need.

## 3. Institutional Barriers

The practices and structures of institutions which are part of the adult education system often inhibit the participation of learners. Accessibility may be reduced by the scheduling of programs and courses, the location of learning facilities, the nature and quality of the learning opportunities offered, and procedural red tape. These problems typically occur within universities, colleges, and particularly affect adults who pursue learning on a part-time basis.

Discrimination against part-time students flies in the face of evidence that this form of learning is the wave of the future. In addition, part-time students have been found to constitute a more representative cross-section of the community than full-time students.

## 4. Lack of Information

The Panel finds a shocking lack of relevant information in all sectors re:

- which and how many adults are participating in education
- where opportunities are available or required and what they consist of
- when educational opportunities will be in demand and supply.

Recent improvements in information technology must be used to place reliable, timely data on labour market trends and educational opportunities in the hands of adult Canadians. With improved information at their disposal Canadians can be trusted to choose a course of study wisely.

## 5. Overly Centralized Control of Canada Employment Centres

Concern exists with the operation of Canada Employment Centres and their perceived lack of responsiveness to local environment and needs. These are seen to be less effective than desirable in the counselling, educational and community resource functions.

In order to enhance the CEC's links with their local environment and to improve the quality of counselling, new forms of interaction between the CEC's and their community are needed. Some new approaches are being tried, particularly 'Outreach' programs which are being designed and managed at the local level across the country. The well-known skills of the voluntary sector in peer counselling and in the linkage with business, unions and the community are needed within the CEC operation.

## DIVISION OF POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The previous section considered Barriers facing Canadians. Whatever solutions are found will have to respect the Constitution and will therefore require Federal-Provincial cooperation.

Recurrent education for adults, on-the-job training, updating and upgrading of skills, vocational retraining while unemployed (or before layoff), are all areas of federal, joint, provincial or uncertain responsibilities. They are also areas of vital importance to every Canadian and must not be allowed to suffer because of Canada's perpetual "division of powers" dilemma.

Only a few Canadians understand the extent to which they have already suffered as a consequence of lack of Federal-Provincial agreement in these adult education matters and they are rightfully angry. Canadians need to be better informed about this and need to be involved in finding compromise and consensus solutions.

Most Canadians view the constitutional divisions of responsibility as providing occasions for community and regional strength with national coordination and mutual cooperation. These are seen as positive means to total learner involvement and regional sensitivity. Unfortunately, the absence of cooperation and consensus between the major constitutional powers can inhibit the effective use of existing resources.

**On the whole, the report generally respects the constitutional sharing of powers and responsibilities, and hence, the jurisdictions of the various partners, in employment, training and education, and clearly takes pains to do so. I merely wish to stress here that, in my view, it is essential to respect scrupulously areas of provincial government jurisdiction when implementing the measures proposed in the report, which should lead to an expansion and gradual modification of the agreements between Ottawa and the provinces on the subject of employment-related training, allowing for the diversity of situations. It is not merely a matter here of holding on to acquired ground, but of giving new impetus to continuing education or *lifelong learning*, and sparking the interaction among the various parties that this involves. This results from the very dynamics of the work-education interaction and, although applying to all of Canada, seems to me particularly important for Quebec, taking into account the specific expectations and needs of the Quebec community, as well as past experience, existing structures and co-operation mechanisms already in place.**

— Guy Bourgeault

# PRIORITY GROUPS

Overwhelming evidence points to groups in the Canadian community whose self-reliance, participation and productivity are handicapped by poor access to learning opportunities;

* women: particularly those who wish to re-enter the work force after extended periods of absence and also those stuck in traditional areas of female employment
* native people
* unemployed youth
* physically and mentally handicapped, or learning disabled adults
* immigrants
* official language minorities
* older adults

Among these groups and in the potential labour force as a whole, the most pressing priorities are:

* educationally disadvantaged adults
* those threatened with job loss and skill obsolescence

Educationally disadvantaged Canadians encounter multiple obstacles to economic and social participation. Their incentive is to remain invisible, and in this they have largely succeeded to date.

The Panel notes with alarm the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission's retreat from addressing this national disgrace over the past few years. To varying degrees, the provincial governments have reflected this negligence, because they were either unwilling or unable to fully address this need.

The educationally disadvantaged in Canadian society can be considered as three overlapping groups which are described below with their functioning grade equivalency (rather than years attained/attended):

| Category | Grade Level |
|---|---|
| 1. **Non-Reading Illiterate** Literacy competency insufficient for reading and writing name and address. | 1-3 |
| 2. **Functionally Illiterate** Literacy competency insufficient for performing every-day administrative tasks such as filling out forms and writing letters. | 4-7 |
| 3. **Below Threshold for Occupational Training** Literacy competency insufficient for absorbing the academic portion of most occupational training courses offered by CEIC. | 8-10 |

Some have argued that the problem, left to itself, may dissipate over time. On the other hand, technological innovations, particularly information processing, may cause the problems of the educationally disadvantaged to grow, rather than to diminish in future. And since a higher level of basic skills will be required in future to reach the threshold of participation, the numbers of educationally disadvantaged adults may be expected to grow.

The cost of functional illiteracy is high for the disadvantaged person, society and the economy. Investments in addressing the needs of this group would be returned many times over in reduced mid- and long-term social support cost and in increased productivity in the work place.

**"It no longer makes sense to cram education into the first eighteen to twenty odd years of life. Nearly everyone who has studied the mal-distribution of schooling over a lifetime agrees that the system should be re-organized and the years of education re-allocated over the period of a normal lifespan... the prevailing systems are generally too rigid to accept lifelong learning as a viable, widely available option."**

– "No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap." A report to the Club of Rome. p. 66.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## STRATEGY

There is an urgent need for action — all sectors agree on this. But there is also a need for further negotiation, public debate, and a process of consensus-building. Therefore, the Panel would like to recommend a two-stage strategy.

### Stage One: Urgent Action to be Undertaken Immediately

1. Endorsement by the Federal government of the goal and principles of "Canada as a Learning Society"; ratification of these principles by the provinces and endorsement by all relevant sectors.
2. The establishment of new federal and provincial government programs to provide support for the educationally disadvantaged.
3. The development of CEIC programs to enable immediate retraining of those threatened with job loss or skill obsolescence without loss of income and the strengthening of Labour Codes to provide appropriate notice.
4. The establishment of Education Delegates in the workplace to link learners in the workforce with local counselling and training opportunities.
5. The institution by the Federal Government of an exemplary program of educational leave in the federal jurisdiction and to encourage similar action by the provinces.
6. The accelerated removal of barriers to learners.
7. A national process of planning and consensus-building. This could include establishment of a representative Federal-Provincial Council on Educational Leave, to work towards implementation of Stage Two recommendations.

### Stage Two: Action to be Undertaken by 1986

8. After negotiation and national discussion, legislation by the federal and provincial governments to implement a universal program for educational leave without loss of income. Such a program would be accompanied by a major publicity campaign, a "Finish High School" program, and complemented by a Registered Educational Leave Savings Plan.
9. The establishment of Local Training Councils, Changes to CEC's, and Experimental Community Employment Centres, in order to better connect learners, needs and opportunities at the local level.

**It seems to me that the panel has chosen the following sequence of its recommendations for very specific reasons. On the one hand, the Panel had to take into account the urgency of situations and problems that call for immediate action, as is moreover recommended in studies and consultations undertaken in recent years including the consultation of October 25-27, 1983. On the other hand, the economic, social and political situation, did not seem favourable to the implementation of major social programs, that could prove to be or merely be perceived as being too ambitious.**

**Moreover, the consultations undertaken, in particular that of October 1983, clearly conveyed a double message: that of the importance and relative urgency of setting up a universal program of paid educational leave in Canada, and that of the need for experiments (or limited pilot projects) and public discussion to establish the necessary consensus with regard to the form such a program would take.**

According to this rationale, the report contains two broad series of recommendations:

1. The first series proposes measures which are considered urgent and which can and must be implemented immediately. Specifically, it is suggested as part of an intensive program to eradicate illiteracy and a special training or retraining program for workers whose jobs or skills are most directly threatened by technological change and plant closures, that experiments with paid educational leave be carried out, with special support and a provisional method of financing, which would lay the groundwork for a future broader-based program; it also suggests the creation of "education delegate" positions in the work environment whose role would be to carry out the programs referred to above and, subsequently, to implement a broader program of educational leave for all workers; finally, it suggests immediate implementation, by the federal government, of a program of educational leave for the personnel under its jurisdiction which would act as a pilot project for a broader program and would pave the way for it; and the gradual elimination of various obstacles to adult education in preparation for the setting up of a universal educational leave program.
2. The second series of recommendations traces the broad outlines of the Panel's view of a much more ambitious program aimed at bridging the gulf at present existing in Canada between work or employment and training. This series of recommendations deals basically with a universal program of paid educational leave, the conditions of implementation, its financing, etc. In the opinion of the panel members, such a program should be set up, once the necessary adjustments have been made (following public discussion and consultation), in 1986 at the latest.

Along with these two series, a third series of proposals and recommendations is intended to promote, over the coming months, discussion, planning and consensus-building — all prerequisites for the vast program outlined above. In the eyes of the panel members, necessary preconditions for the introduction of the proposed educational leave program were the under-taking of consultations, increased co-operation between the various levels of government, and co-operation among governments, employers, workers, educational institutions and other bodies responsible for training, in a spirit of respect for the uniqueness of each contribution while accenting their complementary nature. This consultation-discussion-coordination process is to prepare the ground, in addition to the urgent corrective measures listed in the first series of recommendations, for the implementation of the ambitious program described in the second series and which is intended to bring about the "learning society".

It was within the context and the approach that I have tried to recreate above that I gave and still give my firm support for the recommendations which, moreover, follow the report in its entirety.

— Guy Bourgeault

The Panel suggests that the implementation of each of these recommendations be guided by the following three major considerations.

**Let the Learner Choose**

Economic activity in Canada will become increasingly knowledge-based in future. Flexibility in the work force, the ability to adapt to new and unexpected circumstances, the will and ability to innovate, will all become important. No central authority is likely to be able to predict the nature of job opportunities. This suggests that choices regarding skills acquisition should be made by *Canadian adults themselves,* thereby reducing the risk to the individual (and to the economy) of centralized errors. In this new environment, the best investment will result from letting the adult Canadian choose the content of the learning.

The adult learner should further be free to choose the form of education or training, either institutional or non-institutional, conventional or unconventional. The Panel has confidence that educational institutions will adapt themselves to the needs of adults, but we also insist that there be permitted private, voluntary, novel and non-institutional opportunities as well, so that adult learners have genuine choices.

Learners should, whenever possible, engage in decisions relating to learning, including vocational choice, site, scheduling, course content, learning structure and format.

**Consultation and Collaboration**

The inter-connected nature of the various elements of educational leave necessitates active and constructive consultation among the key parties involved as part of the process of developing specific measures and ensuring their effective implementation.



**All Sectors Share Resources and Co-ordination**

The successful development and implementation of educational leave, and the enjoyment of the resulting benefits, will touch all sectors of Canadian society, including federal and provincial governments, business, labour and the voluntary sector. The obligation to bring resources to bear on this critical opportunity is shared by all these groups, although the nature of their contribution will vary according to the particular circumstances at hand and the measures being implemented.

Similarly, the need for co-ordinating for the effective implementation of educational leave requires a unique contribution from each sector, without which the integrated fabric of this approach would be critically weakened.

No sector can afford to stand back and wait for further developments in the area before engaging itself in the task at hand, hoping that others will carry the responsibility. The special role of each sector, and the far-reaching nature of educational leave, make it imperative that all sectors share the resources and co-ordination needed to make the venture successful.

**"Learners may be said to be those individuals who engage consciously, deliberately and voluntarily in bringing about changes in themselves; changes in knowledge, skill and/or sensibility are included. At some time, learners may adopt the role of student to bring about these changes."**

– Alan Thomas, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

## STAGE ONE: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

### 1. Endorse Goals and Principles

**Objective:**

To gain commitment from all sectors of Canadian society to the goal of:

* **'Canada as a Learning Society'**

and the principles:

* **'A Right to Learn' throughout life so as to acquire and maintain the skills, knowledge and ability to make a contribution to society and to pursue a life of fulfillment and good citizenship.**
* **'An Earned Right' to time and adequate income to engage in learning of their choice for all who have made a contribution to Canadian society.**

The federal government should immediately endorse the goal and principles and recommend ratification by all provincial governments and endorsement by the business, labour, education and voluntary sectors.

### 2. Support for the Educationally Disadvantaged

As a result of its deliberations, the Panel finds it necessary to place special attention on the multiple obstacles facing educationally disadvantaged Canadians. Those adults whose educational background does not permit them to function effectively in the community and the economy require priority attention. Unless a very special effort is made to combat this national disgrace, the Panel has concluded that Canada's functional literacy problem, far from dissipating over time, will rise to crisis proportions in the coming decade.



**Objective**
To enable all educationally disadvantaged adults to achieve their highest potential level of literacy competency.

**Ten Year Program to Combat Adult Illiteracy in Canada**

The Panel recommends that this program include the following elements:

(a) New funding from General Revenues for Employment and Immigration Canada programs to combat adult illiteracy (e.g. Basic Training for Skill Development) which would cover training costs and adequate allowances for program participants.
(b) Additional funding from federal and provincial governments to voluntary and non-profit groups who now work with or who might work with the illiterate. The federal funding could come through CEIC or Secretary of State and should be coordinated with funding from the appropriate provincial departments.
(c) Additional funding for French and English as Second Language programs up to the Grade 5 level.
(d) Funding to put in place innovative programming through distance education, using modern telecommunications methods.
(e) If unemployed, the learner should not lose unemployment insurance or welfare benefits while on a literacy course.
(f) Paid time off for those taking literacy leave, provided that no more than two per cent of the work force of any one establishment is absent on literacy leave at any one time. The two per cent limit could be negotiated upwards in discussions between the employer and union, or the employer and employees and their representative where no union exists. Where a particularly large portion of the work force of one employer at one location is functionally illiterate, special provisions could be negotiated between the employer and union, or the employer and employees and their representative where no union exists,

and both levels of government. The wage cost for employees on literacy leave could be deducted from corporate tax payable instead of from corporate income in order to permit the employer to engage and pay a replacement worker. If the employer is in a no-tax position, the wage cost could be recovered by a tax credit.

(g) Cooperation between the federal and provincial governments in training a "literacy corps" of volunteer, community and paraprofessional teachers to work with and counsel the illiterate. The two levels of government should cooperate in developing and distributing teaching aids and materials to be used at home and in informal settings.

(h) The federal government should take the lead in designing and launching a major publicity campaign, in cooperation and consultation with the provincial governments. Cost-sharing agreements with the provincial governments for this initiative should be agreed to with any province participating in the program and making education and training free and accessible to all who meet the objective criteria.

(i) Establishment of a responsibility centre within the federal government to:

- -provide information to provincial governments and other organizations
- -assist provincial governments in coordinating activities and improving program design or delivery,
- -report annually to Parliament on the progress of the Ten-Year Program.

(j) Regular evaluation of the ten-year program by federal and provincial governments.

**"We consider that if the talents and capabilities of Canadians are to be realized, the adoption of a goal to eliminate illiteracy by the mid-1990's should be established. Every Canadian should be able to exercise his or her right to attain the basic readiness skills of learning, literacy, number skills and life skills."**

- Helen Patterson, Employer's Group, National Consultation, Oct. 27, 1983

## 3. Retraining those Threatened with Job Loss and Skill Obsolescence

**Objective**

To re-train employees designated as likely to become redundant as a result of new technologies, business rationalization or closures, or other measures.

**Action**

1. A program should be established whereby designated employees, that is people who are told by their employer that they may become redundant in the foreseeable future, would receive special treatment:

(a) Designated employees would go on a four-day week, with the fifth day used for re-training. The employer would pay for the four days, maintaining benefits for the fifth, while the Unemployment Insurance Fund would pay the full salary for the fifth day. Other arrangements could be made provided that the costs of training and maintenance of income and benefits would be borne by the employer and CEIC.

(b) Where the employee returns to the same employer, seniority would continue to accumulate while on training.

(c) Wherever possible, the threatened employees should be re-trained for future jobs available in their current place of employment. Otherwise, re-training should be for skills in local demand, or, at the very least, basic skills lacked by the employee and required for further training or greater career flexibility.

(d) A publicity campaign should be undertaken to inform workers and employers that this program exists.

2. Legislative provision in all Labour Codes requiring notice of redundancy must be strengthened to provide appropriate notice to employees and their representatives, to allow time for re-training.

**Business supports innovative approaches to retraining employees facing skill obsolescence. However, we oppose legislation and delays to implementing new technology which limit productivity and our ability to respond to competition in areas undergoing rapid and constant change.**

— Carolynn Walda

**Labour's position is that training for those threatened with redundancy or layoff should be funded from the General Revenue allocation through Employment and Immigration Canada, not unemployment insurance funds. Updating, upgrading and retraining are legitimate training activities of workers who are employed at the time of training.**

**Unemployment insurance funds should be reserved to assist members of the labour force who are seeking employment.**

— Clare Booker

## 4. Education Delegates

**Objective**

To establish vehicles in the workplace that enable learners to be aware of training opportunities available to them, and to influence the types of training offered.

Employees should be able to elect one or more delegates at each workplace to act as education representatives, to discuss, on behalf of employees, education and training matters with management and to perform as a channel of information to employees concerning counselling and training opportunities that are available in the community. Where unions represent the employees, they will conduct the election. Employers should provide facilities and paid time-off from work for the Education Delegates to perform their activities, as well as to be properly trained for this role.

The responsibilities of the Education Delegate include the preliminary counselling and delivering of information concerning opportunities available to the employee in the field of education and training. Such opportunities include on-the-job training, institutional training, community courses and labour education. The Education Delegate would also inform the employee of their entitlement to time-off and income support. The Education Delegate would have access to information concerning training programs offered by the employer.

Legislation should be introduced by federal and provincial governments to create such delegates. Pending such legislation, however, firms should be encouraged to bring about the creation of these delegates.

**Business is supportive of the concept of Education Delegates to provide employees with information about training and counselling opportunities. However, we oppose legislative solutions and prescribed responsibilities which do not permit the flexibility necessary to respond to a variety of individual employee and employer needs. Business takes the view that this approach is inconsistent with the principle of local/community and user responsiveness which is reflected in the other recommendations of the Panel.**

— Carolynn Walda

## 5. Educational Leave in the Federal Jurisdiction

The federal government should institute a program for its own employees and those of crown corporations which is essentially identical to the recommended Model Program for Universal Educational Leave (Stage Two). Immediate steps towards implementing such a program should include the following:

(a) Prepare a comprehensive inventory of existing education and training programs for employees.
(b) Ensure that education delegates are in place.
(c) Provide junior level employees training opportunities to the same extent as now provided at the senior management levels; include part-time employees and those who are in remote areas and/or small offices.
(d) Include union education as a legitimate activity to benefit both the employee and the employer.
(e) Assess managers during their performance appraisal by examining the degree to which they have provided staff with education and training opportunities.
(f) Link education and training goals with affirmative action programs and ensure adequate financing.

The federal government should introduce legislation to bring about similar action for the employees of firms under federal jurisdiction.

Finally, steps should be taken to encourage provincial governments to take identical action in their jurisdictions.

## 6. Accelerate Removal of Barriers

Apart from the major barriers created by the lack of income maintenance (dealt with under the recommended Universal Program for Educational Leave), other barriers stand in the way of learners. This recommendation covers a number of barriers not specifically addressed elsewhere and applies to the programs and measures discussed in subsequent recommendations.

**Objective**

To remove, alter or overcome institutional practices, personal attitudes, and life-circumstances of the individual learner which prevent or discourage adult learning.

**Action**

The Panel recommends the following actions:

(a) There must be more adult education and training specialists who understand the special needs of adults and who have a particular appreciation and sensitivity about those who must overcome disabilities and/or disadvantages.

(b) More spaces should be made available for basic training, with emphasis on provincial responsibility in this regard. It is particularly important that sufficient spaces be available for those completing basic literacy training so as to avoid a discouraging waiting period before skills training can begin.

(c) More informal and non-institutional learning situations must be created.

(d) Immediate increases in funding for voluntary organizations to operate training programs should be forthcoming.

(e) Programs need to be made available where potential learners live. To overcome physical and geographical barriers, funding should be provided to create innovative programming through distance education, using modern technology. One particular idea might be to create a Canada-wide network of television learning channels.

(f) Steps must be taken to arrange for the portability across provincial boundaries of credentials and experience gained by adults in lifelong learning. The Interprovincial Standards Coordinating Committee on Apprenticable Trades should be examined as a model, by the Council of Ministers of Education with a view to establishing bodies for interprovincial equivalency standards at all educational levels.

(g) There must be a review of income support mechanisms, especially for part-time learners. These mechanisms should cover not only scholarships, loans and allowances but should include particular mechanisms to overcome disadvantages. For instance, the cost of providing day care for children while parents are learning should be included.

(h) Much greater information and counselling must be made easily available to disadvantaged adults.

(i) The Panel strongly supports the recommendations of the OBSTACLES report with respect to the education needs of the disabled and encourages government to implement them as quickly as possible.

Additional investment must be made in improving physical access for the disabled to learning institutions, training centres and teaching equipment.

Special financial support must be made available for the physically and mentally disabled and for adults with learning disabilities, considering their need for special learning aids and more individualized instruction.

(j) Expansion is required of programs to eradicate linguistic barriers. Programs to teach English to francophones outside their language community and French to anglophones outside of theirs must be expanded as must training in Canada's official languages for those who speak neither one.

(k) More training programs of various kinds must be made available in French to francophones outside Quebec as for anglophones in Quebec.

## 7. Mechanisms for Discussion, Negotiation and Collaboration Among Sectors

The Panel recommends the development and use of certain cross-sectoral mechanisms to facilitate the full participation and commitment of all sectors in the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The mechanisms required include the following:

### Federal-Provincial Discussions

Negotiations should begin now at the ministerial level and be carried on intensively for the next two years.

### Council on Educational Leave

The Panel recommends, as one possible mechanism for negotiation, the establishment of a Federal-Provincial Council on Educational Leave made up of representatives of all sectors to promote, coordinate and report on the process of national discussion and consensus-building, planning and implementation of the recommendations in this report.

Members would be selected by and responsible to their own sectors. The chair would be elected from within the membership of the Council. The Council would be supported by a Secretariat and other sector members on a seconded staff basis from both levels of government.

In order to ensure the implementation of the Right to Learn, an Annual Report should be made to Parliament, the provincial legislatures and the membership of the Council on participation in, and on resources allocated to, the educational leave program. The Secretariat would be charged with producing a plan for recurrent education which would be acceptable to governments, providers and users.

### Data-Gathering

Statistics Canada should make available improved regular statistics on adult education. Labour Canada should collect and make available statistics on existing provisions regarding all education programs and their financial entitlements as negotiated or provided by employers in a detailed and consistent fashion.

### Public Hearings

A mechanism should be set up whereby hearings can be held under federal/provincial auspices around the country so as to alert Canadians to the meaning of these principles and to find out from them what local impediments, special needs or opportunities might exist. The existing Committee of Ministers with Labour Market Responsibility and Council of Ministers of Education might support the proposed Council on Educational Leave in organizing the mechanism and hearings.

### Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre

The new Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre (C.L.M.P.C.) should be given a special role in collecting and distributing accurate local, regional and national information on the supply of and demand for labour, and on projected or perceived skill gaps. This would permit good local counselling, planning and training programs, and enable all sectors to collaborate on the basis of shared information.

Governments should agree to cooperate fully with the C.L.M.P.C. in conducting an inventory of existing education and training programs, practices within individual firms, and federal/provincial negotiated agreements. Work and learning research responsibility, reporting, and the inventory should be assigned to a designated branch of the agency.

Over the next two years, through the C.L.M.P.C. and in other face-to-face negotiations, labour and management representatives should begin now to discuss the amount of time-off that will be earned per year, the length of each study period, the types of studies to be considered acceptable, the role to be played by the C.L.M.P.C., the role to be played by Canada Employment Centres, etc. They should discuss and agree upon, if possible, the financing mechanism, whether it be the one we have suggested or some other. They should agree on a universal program, whether it be the model we recommend, or some other.

Structures similar to the C.L.M.P.C. should be put in place by provinces to collect and decentralize the flow of information and action.

**Contracts with Voluntary Organizations**

Recent evidence gathered by the Skill Development Leave Task Force indicates that the voluntary sector is the largest single provider of learning opportunities to adult Canadians. Governments at all levels are coming to see their role as facilitator, as opposed to merely deliverer of services to people. These factors converge to suggest to the Panel that governments should look to the local community for greater involvement in the effective delivery of programs.

Both the federal and provincial governments should enter into contracts with voluntary groups and non-profit organizations that promote or conduct adult education in each community so as to create additional opportunities where they are needed.

## STAGE TWO: ACTION IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS

### 1. A Program for Universal Educational Leave

By means of negotiation a program will be designed. The Panel offers this model of one which we would find acceptable and which we feel should command broad support.

**Objectives**

* To enable all adults in Canadian society to acquire and maintain, throughout their lives, the skills, knowledge and ability to make a contribution to society and to pursue a life of fulfillment and good citizenship, and
* to provide adequate time and income for all who have made a contribution to Canadian society to engage in learning of their choice.

**Educational Leave without Loss of Income**

Provincial and federal governments should enact legislation to provide all Canadian workers with the right to earn time-off to take leave for education and training purposes.

Leave could be earned at the rate of one day of leave for every thirty days worked (some Panel members preferred a rate of one day for every twenty worked; others preferred one day for every fifty) and such leave should be a legislated right for all workers. These leave credits could be accumulated and used in a "lump sum period". However, the bank of accumulated leave should not be allowed to exceed a specified number of days. Additionally, unused leave would lapse upon termination of employment with a given employer (except where agreements existed between employers to make such leave transferable). At no time would more than 3.3 per cent of the workforce at any one workplace be permitted to be on educational leave simultaneously (some Panel members preferred a limit of 5% and others preferred a limit of 2%), unless the limit were negotiated upwards by employers and the employees of their representatives.

Since employees taking time away from work represent an additional cost of doing business, particularly where such employees need to be replaced by other help, the Panel recommends that these costs be picked up by a fund specially set up for this purpose. Contributions to the fund could come from a number of sources but the Panel recommends that the fund be supported by equal dollar contributions raised through a surtax on personal income taxes and

corporate income taxes. The surtax would change with experience but it is suggested that it begin at one per cent on personal income tax and three per cent on corporate income tax* which, based on last year's receipts, would raise approximately $500 million. This would cover start-up costs and allow for the build up of sufficient funds to meet expected demand. In light of international experience, the use of the program is not expected to be 100%. Because of anticipated low take-up, particularly in early stages of the program as Earned Right credits are being built-up, the Panel feels that the fund could be used to finance the programs recommended in the report for immediate implementation.

The fund would be used to recover the replacement costs of employees on educational leave. Employers, including the self-employed, would add simple documented evidence of that fact to their tax form and would deduct the costs of those replacements from corporate tax payable instead of corporate income. Where no tax was payable the cost would be recovered in the form of a tax credit claimed on the corporate income tax form. This would keep paper work to a minimum.

Within the government, a paper transfer of funds would occur by Revenue Canada Taxation drawing directly on the fund.

The Panel is aware that Revenue Canada does not like to collect "earmarked" taxes on the Income Tax Form (personal or corporate). We believe that such earmarked collection, which would be done in the form of a surtax, would be useful in this instance, however, so that Canadians would all become aware that they were being taxed for the purpose of retraining and lifelong education, thus leading to the greater possibility that they would use the opportunities for which they are paying.

This funding mechanism would cover the cost of replacing workers who take time off for learning.



Another fund would be required for removing financial barriers — such as the cost of books, tuition and child care — from workers who wish to take educational opportunities that might theoretically be open to them. This fund should be the subject of a federal/provincial agreement and should be similar to or a component of the Canada Student Loan Program which exists now for college and university students. There should be a loan and bursary portion divided as at present between the two levels of government.

There also needs to be expansion of the Skills Growth fund (SGF) to support the creation of facilities for training where such facilities do not now exist and should include effective bridging programs and curriculum development.

There is a need for universities to find funds in order to provide effective bridging programs and curriculum development within degree programs. Such funds are available for non-degree programs through the Skills Growth Fund but cannot be used for degree programs. These new funds could come from either level of government but would have to be negotiated between the federal and provincial governments.

* e.g. A taxpayer now paying $3,000 in tax, would pay $3,030; a corporation paying $20,000 would pay $20,600.

Business' position is that implementation of Skill Development/Educational leave, should be determined by joint employer-employee decisions based on their specific needs and does not endorse a universally legislated program of educational leave. Existing government funds should be re-allocated to develop employable skills and address the priority issues of the educationally disadvantaged and the retraining of those facing job loss. Employers also have a responsibility for retraining employees for other jobs within the company. Employers currently contribute considerable funds to employees' skills development through direct investment in job related training upgrading and retraining.

Positive incentives should be provided particularly for small businesses to those initiating training and/or leave programs. The cost of employees on training should be deducted from corporate tax payable instead of from corporate income. Where no tax is payable, the cost should be recovered as a tax credit or cash grant.

More general education should be user-paid. The proposed registered educational leave savings plan and current employer-sponsored educational reimbursement and leave plans provide funding opportunities for individuals.

Any plan for incremental taxes should be supported entirely by personal income tax. To unduly burden businesses with additional costs, particularly in difficult and unpredictable economic times, severely limits competitiveness and consequently the ability to create new jobs

– Carolynn Walda

Labour's position is that Canadian workers would all earn time off to take leave for education and training purposes. This leave would be earned at the rate of one day of leave for every twenty days worked and such leave would be a legislated right for all workers. These leave credits could be accumulated and used in a "lump sum period", or could be partially used without loss of remaining accumulated days, which could be used at a later date. Leave credits could be used on a regular basis throughout the year to participate in an on-going course providing the entitlement was not exceeded and fell within the regulations governing the use of entitlement. Earned entitlement could be used for education of the individual's choice.

At no time would more than 5 per cent of the work force at any one workplace be permitted to be on educational leave simultaneously, unless the limit were negotiated upwards by employers and the union, or employers and representatives of the employees where no union existed. Employees on earned entitlement would continue to receive wages and benefits.

The costs of education and training will continue to be borne by society — both individuals and business. Hundreds of millions of dollars are presently spent by all levels of government, in the delivery and purchase of education.

Government support comes through the allocation of general revenues directly to education and programs and through loss of tax dollars for allowed deductions to both business and individuals for education and training. This

**Labour (Cont'd)**

allocation and the foregone tax dollars are paid by the Canadian taxpayer.

We propose that our resources be pooled. General Revenues now allocated to delivery and support of programs and adult students would be centralized. This would form the basis of the Federal Training Fund. In addition, our position is that employers who presently provide training receive credit for same and that employers who do not provide training be charged for their training costs borne by General Revenues in an amount based on training costs of similar industries and employers. These funds similarly would flow to General Revenues. Where employers provided training beyond the limits established for their sector a claim could be made against the Federal Training Fund.

To qualify for credit and a reimbursement, training programs must fall within the regulations for earned entitlement and a prescribed content relating to the employees' present or future required skills. Priorities for the training of employees will be assigned from time to time to ensure that those who most require training receive it first (the illiterate), those whose jobs are threatened by redundancy receive second priority, and those who have been discriminated against such as women, natives, the disabled and those in remote locations receive third priority. Priorities would change and evolve to respond to the changing demographics of the labour force and Canadian society. This is not meant to exclude individuals from training, but to establish that previous inequities and barriers must first be overcome.

Federal training funds should be made available to the trade union movement through their recognized national organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress for the purpose of labour education.

The Federal Training Fund and/or General Revenues must also be made available to increase the number of training places presently available in formal and informal situations as required and recommended by the Local Training Councils and agencies such as the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Center.

In addition, allowances must be made to provide opportunity and income support to those who are self-employed or wish to undertake education yet have no earned entitlement.

This financial mechanism would apply to all recommendations requiring funding for training and income support while on earned time off.

– Clare Booker

**Registered Educational Leave Savings Plan**

As a complement to the program recommended above, the Panel recommends a tax sheltered savings program along the lines of the Registered Home Ownership Savings Program (RHOSP), for all Canadians so that they might be able to plan and provide for their own educational leave opportunities.

**Our position is that RELSP does not provide the equity in education and training desired by the National Advisory Panel. Our first priority, the illiterate, is most often found at the bottom end of the wage scale and without the discretionary income to take advantage of such a tax shelter. Women, natives, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups would be similarly discriminated against.**

**The right to income support must be tied to the right to leave from employment which is provided in earned time-off but not the RELSP.**

– Clare Booker and Mary Eady

**"Finish High School" Program**

A "Finish High School (or equivalent)" Program should be instituted for adults across the country. This program should contain free tuition, provided by the provinces, and should make sure that standards for giving credits for previous life experience would be flexible. Affirmative action, special services, and income support should be important parts of this program in order to assist native persons, women re-entering the workforce, disabled persons, immigrants and other possibly disadvantaged groups to enter the program and benefit from it. The program should be available at times and in locations suitable to the disadvantaged learner.

**Major Publicity Campaign**

The federal government, preferably in concert with the provincial governments, should launch a "Participaction" — like media campaign starting in 1985 to convince Canadians of the need to engage in lifelong learning, periodic or recurrent education and/or retraining.

## 2. Local Training Councils and Employment Centres

**Local Training Councils**

We recommend that federal and provincial governments, in consultation with representatives of industry, labour and education, establish local training councils to plan and coordinate programs to meet local needs. These councils should include representatives from federal, provincial and municipal governments, industry, the voluntary sector, labour and education, as well as users and potential users of the system. The councils would have to have additional representatives to take care of the interests of special needs groups. The councils would oversee and advise upon information and counselling services required in the community; they would also arrange for appropriate training programs to meet local needs. Such councils will require an operating budget drawn from all three levels of government according to a specified formula.

**Changes to Canada Employment Centres**

The role of the Canada Employment Centres must be changed so they and the counsellors become more responsive to the needs of the community and the individual client through measures including the following:

i) Regulations regarding "acceptable" training programs must be broader and more flexible to allow the adult to participate in the decisions regarding their own education and future.

ii) Counsellors should receive training so they are more knowledgeable of education opportunities within their community, legislation allowing earned entitlement, and regulations concerning income support.
iii) The services of CEC's should be available to the entire community regardless of whether they are members of the labour force or not. The hours of Centres may have to be extended and Centres may be moved out of government offices and into the community.
iv) CEC counsellors should be aware of the necessary support required by the adult student, including: moral support, suggesting the need for academic up-grading in the case of illiterates, and ensuring that child care is available. The counsellor must have the time and the skills to act as an advocate on behalf of the adult learner.
v) The local training councils should act as advisory councils to the CEC managers.

**Experimental Community Employment Centres**

We recommend that the federal and provincial governments agree on one pilot project in each province or region of the country where the federal government would contract with a local training council to provide those services which can offer the best service to the learner by being defined and managed at the local level.

By maximizing the degree of community control and the degree of coordination with community self-help centres, institutions and needs, it is felt that these centres would be more effective than they are at present under centralized control. The actual handling of responsibilities of the Unemployment Insurance Act can remain under central control, although at the same physical location. The labour market matching and the counselling functions need to be much better coordinated and much better related to each community's particular situation. Employment and Immigration Canada could remain the principal funding and auditing agency, at least at the start, but there would have to be contributions from provincial and local governments according to arrangements contained in agreements. The Panel recommends three-year agreements among the federal, provincial and municipal governments to begin the process, e.g. Core Area Agreement, Winnipeg.

**Labour's position is that the line of authority from the CEC's to the federal government must be clear. It is in the interest of employees desiring education and training to have access to information and programs existing throughout Canada. This does not preclude the need for increased sensitivity and responsiveness to local needs but ensures the link to a Canada-wide Educational Leave program and to resources available in other communities.**

- Clare Booker

## IMPLEMENTATION

To set in motion the implementation of the recommendations in this report, the Panel proposes that the Minister of Employment and Immigration initiate action according to the following workplan.

### Action to be Undertaken Immediately

1. Endorse the two principles identified under the goal of "Canada as a Learning Society".
2. Initiate a Ten-Year Program to Combat Adult Illiteracy.
3. Initiate a program for those threatened with job loss or skill obsolescence.
4. Establish Education Delegates in workplaces.
5. Accelerate action on barriers to educational leave.
6. Establish federal government as model for other employers.
7. Initiate a national process of planning and consensus-building for remainder of measures, including through
   a) establishment of Council on Educational Leave, to
   b) more detailed descriptions of proposed programs, including priority groups, program activities, delivery mechanisms, costs, funding, etc.

### Action to be Undertaken by 1986

8. Develop a universal program of educational leave.
9. Develop additional local and regional mechanisms to connect learners, needs and opportunities, including
   a) local training councils
   b) changes to Canada Employment Centres
   c) experimental community Employment Centres.
10. Launch a "Participaction"-like media campaign starting in 1985 to convince Canadians of the need to engage in lifelong learning, periodic or recurrent education and/or retraining.

### Need for Consultation: The Next Step

Because several of the issues this Panel has been called upon to discuss are of fundamental importance to the country's future, further consultation is required with the social partners to ensure that policies developed are sensitive to the needs of various interests within the Canadian community. Particularly because the issue of skill development leave lies between the respective competencies of the two levels of government in Canada and affects business, labour, education institutions and the voluntary sector, a process of on-going consultation is essential.

The need for action is urgent, and the price of delay will be high. The Panel's recommendations should be examined and costed for potential implementation. At the same time, estimates should be made for the *cost of doing nothing;* we believe it will be much higher.

The recommendations above are the National Advisory Panel's contribution to the search for effective public policy. We call for continuing *consultation,* which should accompany *action.* This report is published as a step in the journey. Reaching the destination is important for every Canadian.

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